

The Virgin Mary.

A
SERMON

Preach'd in

Saint MARY'S

COLLEGE,

(*Vulgo New-College*) Oxon,

March the 25th. 1641.

By the Learned

THOMAS MASTER, B. D.

Ἡ μαρία ἐν τῇ, ὁ κύριος γεννηθεῖσα. Epiphan.

Nolite vos ipsos contemnere, Viri; Filius Dei Virum suscepit.

Nolite vos ipsas contemnere, Fœmina; Filius Dei natus ex Fœminâ est. Augustin.

Let Mary be honoured, the Lord adored.

Do not vilifie your selves, O Men: The Son of God became a Man.

Do not vilifie your selves, O Women; The Son of God was born of a Woman.

L O N D O N:

Re-printed by Henry Hills, in Black-Fryars,
near the Water-side, 1710.



To M. B.

THIS Sermon Preached Thre and
Twenty Years ago, by a Person whose
Memory is still pretious among them who
had the happiness to know him ; and the
Copy of it then imparted to me, having
scarce any other mistakes in it, but such as
I could easily correct and reduce into good
sense : To offer it thus to the publick view,
will be (as I suppose) both an Honour to
the Deceased Author, and a Benefit to the
Ingenious Reader.



LUKE

LUKE I. 26, 27.

And in the sixth Month the Angel Gabriel was sent from God, unto a City of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a Virgin espoused to a Man whose Name was Joseph, of the House of David; and the Virgin's Name was Mary.

WE see what Time of the Year it is; and we understand the Business of the Day, to celebrate a Feast. A Feast in *Lent* may seem not so proper; for how shall Joy shew her self in the House of Mourning? or Fulness in the Kingdom of Hunger? Who sets Dishes of Meat on a Grave? Yet so are *Dainties* to a mouth shut up, saith the Wise Man. And the Church hath shut our Mouths for these forty days: so shut them up, that of old she permitted them not to be opened by those triumphant Rites, which otherwise enlarged then all Mouths and Hearts, the Anniversary-Days of Martyrs. *Non licet in Quadragesima Natalitia Martyrum celebrare: Canon-Law, caus. 34. at non licet.* If the Memory of those glorious Saints could not justify *πνευματικὰς ἀνταμιώσεις*, as *Nazianzen* calls them, those Spiritual Games, and merry Meetings, far more holy and devout (God knows) than all Fasts of ours be; Certainly, the Riot of our Tables at these solemn sad Times, will not be excused, neither by the itch of a wanton Palate (that I may say no worse) nor by the Pretensions of a precise left-handed Conscience, that thinks no Time so fit to make a full Meal, as when the Church commands Abstinence. And yet it seems, she that in *Lent* prohibited Festivals of Martyrs, thought good to establish This, which we now solemnize: And She had Reason. First, Because even in *Lent*, Sunday was always exempted: no Fasting on our Lord's Day: and this is the Day of the Lord. 'Tis true, He is content in Honour of his Mother, it be called *Our Lady-Day*: and it should not discontent us: but it is indeed *our Lord's*, the Day of his Incarnation. Again, the Nativity was never fasted: and the Incarnation needs not to give place to the Nativity: for that, it was more miraculous that God should become Flesh, than that That Flesh

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after

after nine Months should be Born : a greater step from Heaven to Earth, than from the Virgin's Womb to the Manger. At *Christmas* he did but change Rooms ; He came into the World to Day. Say we then with the Psalmist, *This is the Day which the Lord hath made, let us rejoyce and be glad in it* : Yea, which is more, say we, *This is the Day which hath made the Lord* : but then, let the gladness be like the Day ; a Holy Day, a Holy Gladness ; our Joy such as usher'd Christ into the World, a χαῖρε with a μεγαλειότητα, well becoming a Virgin to entertain. For on this message *the Angel Gabriel was sent to a Virgin, &c.*

Our *Parts* will be as the *Persons*, two ; The *Angel* and the *Virgin* : and we shall consider them *jointly*, and then *severally*. First jointly, the Angel and the Virgin : We do not find in the Old Testament much conversation between Angels and this Sex : and when they did meet, the conjunction was not very auspicious : for neither have the Angels been always good, nor the Women still Virgins. In the third of *Genesis*, our Mother *Eve* is at parly with the Devil ; and in the seventh, Angels (for so we do expound that place) are making Love to the Daughters of Men ; and the Issues of both these Interviews are too sad to be forgotten : the Former brought in Sin, and that led in Death ; the Latter begat the Giants, and they drew down a Deluge. Tho' it be an Honour to converse with Angels, yet the Angel and the Woman may be unhappily met. A high place and honourable employment is not always successful, especially if it encounter Minds weak and feminine : for some, like a too warm Sun, it melts ; they flow down and spread into a waxen easie popularity ; Some, like thine, it hardens : they grow rough and intractable : There be whom it sets a boyling, making them the Mother of Giant-like designs, the troubles and distempers of the World ; and there be, whom, like *Eve*, it persuades, They shall not die, and they shall be Gods ; no God beside them, and none greater. And all this, Honour may do, when it comes as a good Angel, sent from God, like him in our Text : What mischief then may it work, when we our selves by forbidden Arts call and conjure it up ? So then, there is but little comfort to see the Angel and the Woman together : let us proceed and view them single.

We

We begin with the *Virgin*, and behold her but in her *perignæum*, her Humility : for in the opposite part, her Exaltation ; she will be too high for our sight. Her degrees, in this lower part of her Orb, are prickt out in the Text, thus : A Virgin supposeth a Woman. 1. Then a *Woman* : 2. A *Virgin* : 3. *Esposued* : 4. To *Joseph* a Carpenter : 5. Of the *House* of David : 6. Her Name *Mary* : 7. Her Habitation, *Nazareth* of *Gahlee*. And all these I take for so many successive Degrees of Humiliation, such yet as the Degrees or Rounds of *Jacob's* Ladder, with an Angel at every one, and a *resplendent* shining from above upon every step. *Woman*, the first step.

1. We must crave leave of the Sex to say of them, as the Scripture says, They are a degree below Man : First, in the Creation, not only that Woman was made for Man, (He therefore her End and Perfection, and so more Noble) but that Man was framed immediately to the Likeness of God, She to Man's ; and so is but the Image of an Image, a Copy, no Original ; a Ray at second reflection, and so more weak. Secondly, in the Fall ; and there She principal. Of the Woman, saith *Siracides*, came the beginning of Sin, and through her we all die ; all at once by the general *morte morieris*, and all severally by the particular occasions and temptations. All die, die by being born of her : for this life is a very death : and die by concurring with her for posterity : for we do not give life to our Children, but leave it. Thus much we may say honourably of her : *honouring her as the weaker Vessel*, saith *St. Peter* : then, to take some notice of weakness in Women, is some honour to them. For I stand not here to justify Malice, or to glean up the Wit that in all times hath been cast away in Pasquils and Declamations against Women : wherein commonly these Men have been the forwardest Accusers of their faults, which have been the chiefest Authors of them. We are all *Adam's* Sons, and we have it of our Father ; *The Woman deceived me*, even the Woman *which thou gavest*, the lawful Wife, God's gift ; much more the strange Woman, the gift of the Devil. We accuse their faces for our dotage, their inconstancy for our foolish credulity, their pride for our flattery. Shall they answer for their own Vices and ours too ?

Nay, their Virtues are traduc'd. Are they free and debonair? We call them wanton. Are they reserv'd? We call them sullen. Their Meekness gives them the name of Sheep, and their Spirit of Shrews. We suspect their Wisdom, we scorn their Simplicity, and their Learning we hate. Laden thus with true Infirmities, and false Accusations, are they sunk below God's protection? Nay, they are in his favour, saith the Angel, *Thou hast found favour*: such a favour as no Angel ever found. For he took not the Nature of Angels, he did of Women: We look high in all our Works, look for Bravery, rather than Convenience: God in his Actions made choice, not of the noblest means, but of the fittest: and what more fit than that, as by a Woman came death, so by a Woman should come the Redemption from death: and as Christ came into the World to teach Humility, so he should enter at this lowest, *Woman*, our first step.

2. The second is *Virgin*, one degree below Woman. Below Woman! What! Do we cry down then the single-bed? Do we pull the Coronets of Glory from the Heads of those Maiden-Saints, whom the Church hath consecrated and commended to us? We dare not do so. It is confess'd, as the present condition of the World now stands, Virginity, as it deserves admiration for its difficulties, so hath infinite Prerogatives over the Estate of Wife and Mother: but from the beginning it was not so; nor as long as Man remembred the right use of every Creature, and could apply himself to the enjoyment thereof, without slackening his due dependance on his God. Not to repeat the Laws and Customs of almost all Civil Nations; the shame and penalties, not only of a single life, but of late marriage, is touched by our excellent *Selden* in his latest Work, lib. 5. c. 3. So then, in the best Judgments, Virgin is below Woman. A Cipher bears no proportion with a Number, and Virgin is a very Cipher in nature, it hath no being nor name, God made it not: for the Law to his Creature was, *Crescite & multiplicamini*; and the contradiction to this, constitutes the form of a Virgin. Then for a Name, *Adam* himself had been at a *Non-plus*; *Ishab* would not serve for it, that hath Man in it: and *Hevab* it could not be, for that is *Mater viventium*. Was she not justly called *הַמַּלְאָכָה* i. e. in the *Hellenists* Language

Apocrypha, a piece of *Apocrypha*, we cannot tell what; nor whence. Now in this Cipher, to lodge all Number (for First and Last is all Number, and so is Christ, *Rev.* 1.) In this emptiness, to couch him in whom all fulness dwells: out of this *Apocrypha*, to produce not the Canonical, but the Essential Word, was a task worthy of that Hand, which called Light out of Darkness, and this All out of Nothing. God doth not always take such ways, as we think most direct to his ends: He might have spoken himself to *Balaam*, but he made the Ass do it, the Emblem and Proverb of Dulness to tutour the Prophet. He might have posed the Magicians and Philosophers, by producing a Lion, or Elephant; he did it by the least of Creatures, and the soonest generated, certainly many times most familiar with Philosophers. In our Redemption, what was more unlikely, than to raise and quicken us by death? Do not confine God's Power and Goodness to the narrow sphere of thy Understanding. Thou knowest not the utmost extent of Nature or Art: in Nature thou daily seest contrary effects proceeding from the same causes, and the same effects from causes that are contrary: and by Art thou art confident, thou canst frame an Instrument, which, charged with thy vital Air only, shall kill; and that there may be a Burning-Glass made of a piece of Ice. Do not doubt it then, if the Angel saith it, She shall be a Mother, tho' a *Virgin*: this was our second step.

3. The third is *espoused*: Espoused! That's somewhat lower yet. It is indeed the way, *via Regia*, God's, and the King's highway from Maid to Wife, but is neither; and therefore inferior to both. For all Motion is less perfect than its Terms. The Virgin stands like a blooming Rose in the midst of a Garden, and draws all eyes to hers: the Wife is as the Rose gathered, and bound in a Garland for the Husband's head: but the Spouse is as the same flower drawn in at a window, and not yet cropt from the bush, suffering at once the confinement of a Wife, and the solitariness of a Maid: She hath foregone the liberty of the one, and not attained the privileges of the other, having exchanged certainties for hopes; for *sponsalia* are but *spes nuptiarum*, saith the Civilian. Yet the espoused finds favour with God, and we accept the vulgar Note, Christ being born of this ἀμφίβολον, this Participle, half Maid, half-Wife, meant thereby to sanctifie to us the conditions of both: tho' perhaps

he would intimate also, that in things of this life, as Marriage or the like, he approves of that Temper that steers a middle course, neither wholly declining the World, nor embracing it too greedily, as if we were wedded to it, since the continual close grasping of humane business makes us loose our hold of God; and the utter abandoning of all, is to desert our station here, and, as much as in us lies, to uncreate the Creation. There is a far distance between the meer Politick, who breathes nothing but Intelligence, and Instructions, and Accommodations, and State-interest; and the solitary Man in the Pillar. That is the true complexion, which the Apostle requires, That they which have Wives, be as they which have none; and they which have Husbands likewise: which was the condition of the Blessed Virgin in the third step, *espoused*.

4. The fourth is, to *Joseph*, a Carpenter. Still we descend: Had she been of the Priests kindred, and no more, and lived somewhere else, peradventure a Carpenter might have past for a fair match: but being of the Race of Kings too; for by Her Christ claims to be *David's* Son; and among that people, which ever held the Persons of their Kings and Priests most sacred and sublime; there it must seem no small disparagement to accept a Spouse, whose Living lies in his finger's ends, a Mechanick, a Mercenary; nay a profession so vile, that *Plato* forbids it to the Natives of his Commonweal: and *Aristotle*, where he allows Musick and Painting, as qualities fit for a Gentleman, so far forth as to judge of a piece in either kind, prohibits yet the practice of them, as abasing men's bodies and minds, and rendering them unfit for great Actions. And indeed among the Ancient Patriarchs, we find Husbandmen and Shepherds, but no Artificers. So then, that a Virgin so high-born should stoop to a Carpenter, is very low: yet the next step leads us lower.

5. *De domo David*: It is much for such inequality to meet under the same roof: how if it concur in the same person? *Joseph* of the loins of King *David*, and yet a Carpenter. *Miserum est fuisse*: a great heart-breaking, to see the pomp and plenty of his Ancestors changed to such penury, that he is fain to set himself to hire, to earn his daily bread; to find the Palace, as with the turning of a Scene, vanish'd into a Cottage, and in his hand an Ax instead of a Scepter: In the mean while to see *Herod* on the Throne, a Foreigner, a Vagabond, toss'd by Fortune from *Ascalon* to *Edom*, and from *Edom* to *Judea*: where, having beyond Hope gotten the Crown on his head, he cements it there with the blood of the right Heirs: And after all this, to have a Spouse, who when she should comfort him, cannot, having the same

cause

cause of grief her self: nay, who adds one further degree to both their sorrows by her very *Name*, our sixth step.

6. The Virgin's Name, *Mary*: that is, *Queen*, or *Lady*: for so I am told it signifies in the Syriac. This *nominis onus*, makes all the rest more heavy and pressing: they might else perhaps, by little and little, have worn out the memory of their high extraction, and like an ordinary couple, lived and died together quietly among their Neighbours in *Nazareth*. But now, *Mary*, like a perpetual Watch-word in their Ears, keeps their Remembrance waking. The Husband cannot call the Wife by her Name, but instantly that represents to their sad Souls, both what they are now, and from what they are fallen; besides the scorn of scurrilous Wits, who would think it an excellent occasion for a Libel, that a Carpenter's Wife should be called a *Lady*. But for all this, *Fear not Mary*; εὐφραίνου, saith the Angel. She stands now in the presence of God, and to his sight there is no difference between a Carpenter and a King, both equally distant from God: A Million is no nearer to Infinite, than an Unite. There is a *δυναμις*, *Matth. 1.* the being an honest Man, that makes the Carpenter a great Personage; and this Virgin takes it for a great Fortune. She shall not chuse for us: We must have Heirs, Heirs sometimes of more Vices, more Curses than Lordships; yet we think our Children well bestow'd: which is to bid *Pluto* to the Wedding, and shut Christ out of doors. The Virgin is content with the honest Carpenter; and He also comforts himself. The House of *David* is not fallen much lower than its Original: it began in a Shepherd, and should it disdain an Artificer? Shall the Sheep-hook say to the Hammer, Thou art not Noble. It is the fashion indeed of Men, raised from low fortune and birth, to study the Art of forgetfulness, and like the pinnacles of their new-built Houses, to look with scorn on the grounds that bears them. But we see here *Joseph* not of this Humour: who, besides his Humility, was so wise and charitable to boot, that I believe he look'd on *Herod* himself with more pity than indignation; as on a Man, undone by preferment, curs'd with a Crown, that must be maintain'd with so much mischief. As for his Trade; let him glory herein: That Generation was to see the World new moulded, by Tradesmen, Fishers and Tent-makers, being sent out by a Carpenter, the supposed Son of this *Joseph*, to conquer Kings, to dispute with Philosophers, to teach the Greek learning, and the Jew law; to ordain Religion, and reform Manners; to command Nature, to converse with Angels, and pull down Satan from his Throne. Then shall the Virgin, the Carpenter's Spouse rejoice,

and

and in her Name many shall read a large Prophecy: for, as all Generations shall call her Blessed, so all Generations shall call her Lady. If she look forth, she shall see the stately Piles of Churches and Colleges dedicate to God in Memory of Her; Orders of Monks and Knights, praying and fighting under her Title; Her Praise sung in Hymns and Anthems; Her Attributes of Honour digested into Alphabets: more, much more, 'till (as at the erecting of the Tabernacle) the Offerings flowed in so fast, that there needed a Proclamation, *Nec Vir, nec Mulier, offerat ultra*. And in Heaven, if she look about, She shall behold Legions of Angels, and of blessed Souls, bowing themselves at the feet of her Son: in the glory of whose exalted Body, she doth not only, like others, see a Type of her own, but her own body already glorified: for his Body is hers, and she may as truly say of him, *This is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh*, as Adam could of Eve. May not we then, who call Christ Lord, call his Mother Lady? We may, so we make it a Title of Honour, not of Worship; a Note of Eminency, not of Authority. It is true, some have gone too far: Do not thou therefore fall short: Wilt thou be prophane, because thou hast been superstitious? Why shou'd'st thou think, thou canst not value her too low, whom God so highly regarded? For it was wittily noted and truly, by him who said, God did offer her as much as he could do, that is, more than he did for all the World beside; for he could have made the World greater than it is, and all things in it greater than they are, but Her he could not make a greater Mother than she is: the Θεοτόκος, the Antients call her, *The Mother of God*. Let her then stand in the Kalendar still, and, as she does, appear once at least every Quarter: that when thou shalt look for the day of thy Rents, or of thy Sports, or of thy Suitor, or of thy merry meetings, thine eye may not fail to encounter that Name; and think it more worthy the regard of Lady, than thy Lady Profit, or thy Lady Pleasure, or thy Lady Love, or thy Lady, I know not who, not to be named, whilst we speak of Virgin. Suffer her, now she has conceived Christ, to ascend into the Mountain of Juda: do not detain her still below, in her obscure habitation Nazareth of Galilee, and our seventh step.

7. It is indeed the lowest we can go: we are now at the ground, nay the Grave: for the Grave is but *umbra mortis*: and yet in the description of this place, given by a Prophet and Evangelist (*Isa. 9. Matth. 4.*) *The land of Zabulon and Nephthali, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people situate in darkness, and in the shadow of death. Umbra mortis* is more than the shadow, or dark-

ness either: for *umbra* is but *lux diminuta*, and darkness is but the absence of light: but *umbra mortis* is a deadly killing shadow, such a one as some Trees cast, which do not only intercept the cheerful Rays of the Sun, but shed also a malignant and poisonous influence; such as *Galilee in umbra*, both for Government and Religion, as being the Skirt of all the Country, bordering upon the great Sea, far from *Jerusalem*, the Fountain of Light; and in *umbra mortis* too, both by their daily contagion by the Importation of foreign Commodities and Vices together, (the usual Calamities of Maritime Coasts) their Religion deeply tainted with all sorts of Idolatry from their Neighbours on every side, flowing hither as into a common River, from *Samaria*, the Reliques of *Jeroboam's* Calves; from *Persia* and *Babylon*, the Abominations of those Countries, transplanted hither with their Colonies, 2 Kings 17. Lastly, that all Shrines should be full, the *Phœnician* Gods, their old acquaintance, are not severed. Here was a sad Shade; but behold, a vigorous Ray from *κεχαρειταμῶν* above, to illustrate all; a *Gratiâ plena*, for an Antidote to keep out all damps and ill airs. So that, where perchance to see a Virgin at fifteen was once a miracle; now it is no wonder for a Maid of that age to converse with Angels (for we may collect from her Conference with *Gabriel*, they were no strangers to her:) where it was said, no good could come out of *Galilee* (*nihil boni*, Joh. 1. 47.) thence shall spring the eternal Fountain of all Goodness: whence they held no Prophet should arise (*ex Galilea nullus Propheta*, Joh. 8.) thence shall appear the Master and Subject of all Prophecies: *Galilee* shall be as *Judæa*, and *Nazareth* as *Jerusalem*; and from those dark Confines, this Horizon of the Gentiles, shall the bright *Star of Jacob* shine forth, Numb. 24. 17. Thou then that hast the favour to be born in a temperate Clime, a happy Country, full of Riches and Honour, of Knowledge and Civility, art blessed with the Light of the revealed and saving Truth, do not despise thy poor Brethren under the Poles, or the Line; do not think God hath no care of them, because he hath provided better for thee: thou may'st not call them Barbarous, because their Arts or Customs, are not like unto thine; much less may'st thou pronounce them damned, because they are not of thy Religion. Again, thou that makest thy nest in the City, among the Palaces of Princes and Temples of the Gods, feasting thy Body with the Marrow of the Land, and thy Ears with the abundance of the Word; do not insult over the Swain, that glories in the good, and makes it his care to give the Kine fodder, Eccles. 38. Is the Country rude? So is the City petulant. Doth the Peasant lack manners? So doth the Burgeſs conscience. If

at *Nazareth* there be silly Souls that want Preaching ; there be also at *Jerusalem* Pharisees, Hypocrites, that have Sermons every day, and never the better. Deceive not thy self ; He that comes up from *Nazareth* but thrice a year, to do Devotion with a sincere heart, shall rise up in Judgment against thee, who dwellest in the Holy, Royal City ; it neither the Presence of the King's Throne, nor the Awe of God's Altars there, can keep thee from Insolence and prophane Outrage. Lastly, do not hastily condemn nor traduce any Man, in point of Religion or Life, because he converseth with some, whom thou thinkest unsound in either. Peradventure those are not so : thou hast been often deceived. Consider, his Parentage, or Employment, or Neighbourhood, or some other Relation of common Humanity, may have cast him upon such company ; yet he still remain untainted : The Fish comes fresh from the Sea, tho' it be there in a continual pickle : and some have returned as good Protestants from *Rome* ; as others from *Geneva*. Remember, there was found, even in *Galilee*, a Virgin, fit to entertain an *Angel*.

An *Angel* ; our second Person and Part : but He too high and too bright for our approach at this time. Here then make we a stand, and reflect upon the Degrees already past : where, if on every step we meet our *Souls*, let it not discourage us ; since from this Lowliness the Virgin was exalted to be the Mother of Jesus Christ. We would willingly bear her company in her Exaltation ; let us not disdain the company of her Humility.

1. First then, our Soul is a *Woman*. Let *Eve* be her parallel : She was made for a helper, and so she seduces and destroys us ! There were no sin, nor death, but for the Soul. For things that want Souls (reasonable Souls, such as ours) sin not, nor do they truly die ; but fall asunder, and all pieces being material, remain as happy as before : but We, for our soul's and sin's sake, die and die again, (*morte morieris*) a double death. Just then, as *Adam* called the Woman, *Mater Viventium*, when indeed she was the Mother of Death : So, we style our souls Immortal, when it is that only by which we die. Again, like *Eve*, she is so silly as to suffer her self to be couzened by a Beast ; and not by the subtiler Serpent alone, but by every dull Animal. Every gross Opinion, Passion and Humour, makes a very Fool of her : and she is so jealous, she easily believes, God goes about to deceive her too. For she knows and confesses, that thus and thus God hath said, and yet she lends an Ear to the contrary. She is always to remember *Mater mortis* : in a fit Ambition, for *Eritis sicut dii* ; in a fit of Sickness, for *non moriemini* ; in a fit of Curiosity, for a little knowledge ; and in a fit of Lust and Wantonness, *Eve* for an *Apple*.
And

And all this, *Eve* did but once, our Soul doth it every day, and so the more *Woman*.

2. Then, she is a *Virgin* too. This we hope is some Honour: but we must know, tho' in the World of Bodies there be Cases that commend Virginitie, it is not so in the World of Souls. Nay, Virgin-Bodies are therefore honourable, because they keep their Minds from being so. Every good soul, is a Mother; her Issue, Knowledge and Virtues and Graces, conceiv'd from those seeds, wherewith Nature and God's Spirit hath quickned her. Would our soul, as she ought to retain, to cherish, to ripen, to exalt these, she might with joy behold children, and children's children: So still one Knowledge begets another, and one Virtue another, and one Grace another; there is none barren among them. But now she is so taken with her own Beauty, that she cares not to be a Mother, as fearing perhaps that Child-bearing should fill her with wrinkles; and she is so much in Love with Liberty, that marry she will not, tho' God himself comes wooing with, *Desponsabo te mihi in aeternum*. And yet Beauty will not be kept, nor Liberty neither. Not her Beauty: for as we see commonly in Bodies, while they labour to keep their Virginitie, they lose their health, and with it the Verdure of their complexion; that which was intended for posterity, bestowing it self into diseases: So in Souls, those generous principles, those lusty seeds of knowledge and action, being checkt and forbidden to display themselves into legitimate Births, break out into Monsters, Vanity and Vice, not the children, but the sickness and blemish of the soul. And her Liberty, that's gone already; for she is *espoused*, the third step.

3. There is no man but hath his favourite-study, his favourite-humour, or his favourite-vice; which being commended unto him by his Complexion or Country, his condition or faction, his soul accepts and espouseth herself to them: and now she must not hear, nor see, nor judge, but as they lust. Thus all with *Aristotle* is Logick, all with *Plato* Theology, all with *Pythagoras* Number. Thus the Philosopher disputes down Grace, and the Divine preacheth down Nature: the Roman Catholique couples Calvinism and Turcism together; and the Calvinist would have us think *Rome* as Pagan as ever: Thus the Ambitious Man looks on the World as a stair to Greatness, the Voluptuous Man as a bed for Delight, the Covetous on what may be turned to Gold, the Malicious on what may be converted to Gall and Wormwood. If there be a Soul that hath escaped these unhappy Spouses, there remains one that will not be denied, that's the Body, the *Carpenter*, our fourth step.

4. We do not mean by *Body*, this *Flesh of Man*, this walking Statue, this *earthen house*, as *St. Paul* calls it, *2 Cor. 5.* that is but the Carpenter's Shop, he himself is within, the Spirit that moves it to Vegetation and Sense. And is not this the Carpenter? You know, a Mechanick he cannot work without his Tools, and all his Faculties are Organical: And you may well call him Carpenter, for he built the House, he lives in it, which would quickly fall on his head, did he not every day repair it. Do not thou, by lust and intemperance make this house yet more ruinous: that were to trouble the Carpenter with more work than needs, and thy Soul feels disturbance enough already in her Contemplations, Devotions, and Raptures, by the necessary noise and hurry in the Work-house; such a vexation to some Philosophers, that they were sorry and ashamed, and even angry with God, to see the Soul so matcht: but that needed not; for the Carpenter is nobly descended, *of the House of David*, our fifth step.

5. He is high-born: Esteem him by his Actions. In the representation of sensible objects, that whereby we conceive and retain appearances, that whereby we judge and distinguish them, whereby we apprehend them as Good or Evil, and accordingly follow or decline them, must be thought a piece, though inferiour to the mind, yet too noble to spring from the sordid womb of matter. But the cunning framing of the *Embryo*, that is such a Master-piece, as plainly argues, it's Architect came from heaven: and therefore the Work of the seminal Spirit hath been the amazement of Physicians, hath been ascribed by Philosophers to *Demon* and Intelligences, by Prophets to God himself. So noble a Body would be used with Reverence. Hadst thou a servant, that were a Son to some distressed Prince, thou wouldst not employ him in any base office, and wilt thou set this Carpenter of the Royal Blood to build Hogg-styes, and Cabins for every unclean beast? For such are thy Senses and Faculties, when Lust possesseth them. Dost thou not hear him sigh, and groan to be thus used? *συσταλάει καὶ συνωδίνει*, saith *St. Paul*, *Romans 8.* he is in an agony, and faints under the work; not for the labour, but for the indignity; and his Spouse the Soul, she is discontented too: Her very Name is a burthen to her, our sixth step.

6. The Virgin's Name was *Mary*: *Mary* is *Lady*, and that is the Soul's name too. Do we not call her *τὸ ἡγεμονικόν*, the leading, the commanding part? We do indeed: but she hath little cause to please her self in that name, considering her present estate; as a Lady of fourscore, to behold her picture at fifteen.

fifteen, and compare it with her Glass. The Soul was once to *ἡγεμονίᾳ*, she sate as a Lady, a Queen; all the inferiour Faculties, like good Subjects in order, place, and obedience attending her; and this Correspondence at home bred reputation abroad: no enemy durst appear: every Beast of the Forrest stood in awe of her. But now, Whither is that Majesty fled, when from abroad every flea vexeth her, at home her Affections and Passions all out of tune: they repine, they mutiny, they break out into open Rebellions; they canton out the Dominion of the Soul among themselves, and every one will be King in his Quarter: Anger will reign in Choller, and Lust in Blood; Sloth in Phlegm, and Despair in Melancholy: and rule they will not according to the Prince's Law, or the Law of the Land, but each by a Law of his own making, the *νόμος ἀμαρτίας*, as St. Paul calls it, *Rom. 7*. Thus is the Soul dethroned and devested of all. Indeed there have been designs to restore her: The Heathen Philosopher, her old Servant attempted it, by Virtues of all sorts, Moral, Civil, Intellectual; and the Christians Divine, her late Counsellor, hath laboured the same, by encouraging her to resume her Right, by perswading the inferiour Faculties to submit, by calling in Foreign Aid, and God himself from Heaven to set all forward. Some effect hath followed, but the Work will not lead on, as long as She dwells here at *Nazareth of Galilee*, our last step.

7. This World is *Galilee in umbra*, as that was, far from *Jerusalem*, the Head and Mother-City; and *in umbra mortis*, as that was, two ways: for Manners and for Religion. For Manners, we see Vice boldly practised on all sides, and every bad example is *umbra mortis*, a deadly side. 1. Whether it be cast by an eminent Man, as a great Tree; or by a Multitude, as by a Hedge, an Arbour of many small Twigs; the Shade is all one, and equally deadly, if we fly to it for shelter. Then, *in umbra mortis* too, for Religion: for every Idol-grove casts its shadow: and every Country, and almost every Man hath his Idol: they that seem to agree on the same God, yet doing it on several notions and grounds, sometimes unworthily and untruly, do but worship the same Name, every Man hath his Deity apart: and thus for Education, Law, or Faction, I make the true God my Idol. Now, when a Man hath set up his Idol in his Heart, and planted a Grove about it, that Grove doth so bes shade and benight his Reason, that no Light can follow it: Thus, as the *Egyptians* did in their
thick

thick Darknes, he sits down and sets his Heart at rest, and seeks no further. This makes the Turk as zealous in his Religion as the Christian, the Jew as either, and the Indian as any : this makes the Heretick and Sectary, as resolute as the true Catholick : there are Martyrs on all sides : the Tongues walk, and the Pens walk, and the Swords fly out, till we slide and fall, and wallow in one another's blood : thus the Earth becomes full, not only of Darknes, but of cruel Habitations. Were not an Angel now seasonable with a *χαῖρε κεχαρισμένη* to comfort us ? Lord, let thy Holy Spirit overshadow us, and all those evil Shades will flee away ! Let him, as once (in our Baptism) he begat us to Christ, so descend again, and beget Christ in us ! So shall this Soul of ours, this *Woman*, put on the strength and understanding of a Man ; this *Virgin* shall bear the fruits and joy of a Mother, and yet in her Purity she shall be a Virgin still : This *Spouse* shall no longer doubtfully hover between Maid and Wife, but shall be ever married to God, the God our Lord, the greatest and best Husband ; She shall see her old Husband, the Body, much refined, but a *Carpenter* still, imployed by the Holy Ghost, not only to build a Temple for Him, but to be one. Thus shall the Body be restored to the Dignity of its Parentage, being more than *David's Son*, God's own Workmanship ; and the Soul, whose *Name* calls her *Lady*, shall recover her Jurisdiction, and rule by her own Law, the Law of the Spirit : and all this in some measure here below at *Nazareth*, but in full perfection then when we shall be called up from *Galilee* to *Jerusalem*, from the shadow of Death to be eternal, inexpressible, incomprehensible Light and Life, which is with God, and which is God.

F I N I S.

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